

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 42

**Introduced by Assembly Members Aghazarian, Frommer, and
Liu**

(Principal coauthors: Senators Poochigian, Scott, Simitian, and Speier)

February 15, 2006

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 42—Relative to the Armenian
Genocide.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 42, as introduced, Aghazarian. Armenian Genocide: Day of
Remembrance.

This measure would designate April 24, 2006, as the “California
Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.” It
would memorialize the Congress of the United States to act likewise
to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Armenian people, living in their 3,000 year
2 historic homeland in eastern Asia Minor and throughout the
3 Ottoman Empire, were subjected to severe persecution and brutal
4 injustice by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire before and after the
5 turn of the 20th century, including widespread massacres,
6 usurpation of land and property, and acts of wanton destruction
7 during the period from 1894 to 1896, and again in 1909; and
8 WHEREAS, The horrible experience of the Armenians at the
9 hands of their oppressors culminated in 1915 in what is known
10 by historians as the “First Genocide of the Twentieth Century,”
11 and as the prototype of modern-day mass killing; and

1 WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide began with the arrest,
2 exile, and murder of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, and
3 political, religious, and business leaders, starting on April 24,
4 1915; and

5 WHEREAS, The regime then in control of the empire, known
6 as the “Young Turks,” planned and executed the unspeakable
7 atrocities committed against the Armenian people from 1915
8 through 1923, which included the torture, starvation, and murder
9 of 1,500,000 Armenians, death marches into the Syrian desert,
10 the forced exile of more than 500,000 innocent people, and the
11 loss of the traditional Armenian homelands; and

12 WHEREAS, While there were some Turks and others who
13 jeopardized their safety in order to protect Armenians from the
14 crimes being perpetrated by the Young Turk regime, the
15 genocide of the Armenian people constituted one of the most
16 egregious violations of human rights in the history of the world;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, The United States Ambassador to the Ottoman
19 Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated “Whatever crimes the
20 most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, and
21 whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most
22 debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes
23 of this devoted people. I am confident that the whole history of
24 the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The
25 great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost
26 insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian
27 race in 1915. The killing of the Armenian people was
28 accompanied by the systematic destruction of churches, schools,
29 libraries, treasures of art, and cultural monuments in an attempt
30 to eliminate all traces of a noble civilization with a history of
31 more than 3,000 years”; and

32 WHEREAS, Winston Churchill wrote: “As for Turkish
33 atrocities: ... massacring uncounted thousands of helpless
34 Armenians, men, women, and children together, whole districts
35 blotted out in one administrative holocaust—these were beyond
36 human redress”; and

37 WHEREAS, Contemporary newspapers like the New York
38 Times commonly carried headlines such as “Tales of Armenian
39 Horrors Confirmed,” “Million Armenians Killed or in Exile,”
40 and “Wholesale Massacre of Armenians by Turks”; and

1 WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, in persuading his army
2 commanders on the eve of World War II that the merciless
3 persecution and killing of Poles, Jews, and other peoples would
4 bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks today of
5 the annihilation of the Armenians”; and

6 WHEREAS, Unlike other peoples and governments that have
7 admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor
8 regimes, and despite the overwhelming weight of evidence, the
9 Republic of Turkey has inexplicably and adamantly denied the
10 occurrence of the crimes against humanity committed by the
11 Young Turk rulers, and those denials compound the grief of the
12 few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate the memory
13 of the victims, and cause continuing trauma and pain to the
14 descendants of the victims; and

15 WHEREAS, Nations that have officially recognized the
16 Armenian Genocide have been subjected to retaliation and
17 condemnation by Turkey; and

18 WHEREAS, There have been concerted efforts to revise
19 history through the dissemination of propaganda suggesting that
20 Armenians were responsible for their fate in the period from
21 1915 through 1923 and by the funding of programs at American
22 educational institutions for the purpose of furthering the cause of
23 this revisionism; and

24 WHEREAS, Leaders of nations with strategic, commercial,
25 and cultural ties to the Republic of Turkey should be reminded of
26 their duty to encourage Turkish officials to desist from efforts to
27 distort facts and deny the history of events surrounding the
28 Armenian Genocide; and

29 WHEREAS, The accelerated level and scope of denial and
30 revisionism, coupled with the passage of time and the fact that
31 few survivors remain who serve as reminders of indescribable
32 brutality and torment, compel a sense of urgency in efforts to
33 solidify recognition and reaffirmation of historical truth; and

34 WHEREAS, By honoring the survivors and consistently
35 remembering and forcefully condemning the atrocities
36 committed against the Armenian people as well as the
37 persecution of the Assyrian and Greek populations of the
38 Ottoman Empire, we guard against repetition of the crime of
39 genocide; and

1 WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest
2 population of Armenians in the United States, and those citizens
3 have enriched our state through leadership in the fields of
4 academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the
5 arts and are proud and patriotic practitioners of American
6 citizenship; and

7 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront
8 in encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human
9 rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to
10 prevent recurrence of the crime of genocide; now, therefore, be it

11 *Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of*
12 *California, jointly*, That the Legislature of the State of California
13 hereby designates April 24, 2006, as the “California Day of
14 Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and
15 be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the State of California commends its
17 conscientious educators who teach about human rights and
18 genocide; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the State of California respectfully
20 memorializes the Congress of the United States to act likewise to
21 commemorate the Armenian Genocide; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit
23 copies of this resolution to the President of the United States,
24 Members of the United States Congress, and the Governor.